## Selected Longer Poems

By the same author
Ommateum
Expressions of Sea Level
Corsons Inlet
Tape for the Turn of the Year
Northfield Poems
Selected Poems
Uplands
Briefings
Collected Poems: 1951-1971
(winner of the National Book Award for Poetry, 1973)
Sphere: The Form of a Motion
(winner of the 1973-1974 Solingen Prize in Poetry)
Diversification
The Snow Poems
Highgate Road
The Selected Poems: 1951-1977

## A. R. Ammons

## Selected Longer Poems

## $W \cdot W \cdot N O R T O N \& ~ C O M P A N Y$ <br> NEW YORK•LONDON

## Acknowledgments

A list of all my longer poems, arranged chronologically, would read as
follows:
Tape for the Turn of the Year (published separately)
Pray Without Ceasing
Summer Session
Essay on Poetics
Extremes and Moderation
Hibernaculum
Sphere, the Form of a Motion (published separately)
Summer Place (The Hudson Review, Summer 1977)
The Snow Poems (published separately).
I am grateful to Jerald Bulls who suggested that a book such as this should be made available to go with The Selected Poems 1951-1977 which contains
shorter poems.
with all my love to my son John

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Pray Without Ceasing
I hear the low falling from the
highlands of hog-pasture, a musicof spheres, a couple: whatever is
done is to be
undonecall me down from thehigh places: I have achieved muchof the difficulty of my translation:
stock in trade
gunstock
stockings
stocks \& bonds \& good
stock
put no stock in that
a stock case
in stock
stock the soup

3, the mystical figure, comes through:
the alternating, suspended,
opposing spheres undirected and
the directed unity, reconciler and
putter to sleep-
milt on
the levees of rationality:

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SELECTED LONGER POEMS

"O Aegypte,

Aegypte, of thy religious rites nought will survive but tales which thy children's children will not believe; nought
will survive but words graven upon
stones that tell of thy piety."
(Trismegistus)
and in sleep, as in a natural sleep, prone, face turned as if into breath, he had about him needments, bottles of rare glass, bowls: we wrapped him in reed mat, rose from decomposing, generating waters, went up on the plateau
and put him in
sand: hereafter has
not changed since for him:
but his head's
magnificence and funny-stuff, those epicycles of motion, rituals of turning, dancing, the wind has taken, nothing changed into grass: all the way out of the rise and fall:

O Egypt I sometimes hear the future of the universe speaking in a moon wheel's turning of sand and light:
we set out a withe of silver grass and it remains: it
has interfered with the natural wind,
fractured the paralleleity of
moonbeams and disturbed
lesser sandstorms: mimicry
so often far more succeeds:
you heal back from napalm: the flame-scars pull chin to chest, the fingers stick: the mercy of sand's
scarless:
when the sand roars, a lion rouses in the center, his eyes, as if in a hollow, headless:
recognition is
the fiercest imperative:
${ }_{a}^{a}$ pararox, couple achers: the real estate of the imagination:
whatever is-
terror, pity, grief, death,
rising-a child sits in explosion's
clutter, homeless, his small
driftwood legs, his eyes inventing
an equal rage \& dark, white smears
of burn
the mask
his face must fit:
whatever is, brutality, the inner siege,
the mind orange, blue with
desolation's mold, something
thin \& high
cuts through whatever is
and makes no difference of difference:

PROOF TWO 6-12-79 k1-es c-e
my mouth, become eyes, weeps words: words spill
into
hyacinths: for my acquaintance with grief is
intimate, lost voices my credentials singing's been sung: the same body is crying:
fatigues snagged by wire, bodies sag in their buttons, collars flutter, surf jogs, the wind all outside and usual:
blue dusk fills up under the gold smoke: the sky violates nothing to intercede:

I held her
by the rose and
intruded: the petals
slickened, silken: I shaved
my head \&
offered it there:
O rose
the microflora along your hinder walls are fast bloomers: tunnel-scapes beady with stiff
moss: who keeps the saltsea keeps its plankton, not reasonable? microflora, reproducing, don't mind the long glider that
coming shoulders out the wind to fundamental suction: collapsible I live with
spherical walls:
everyway I look leaning in, leaning in's the style \&
passing over: I pick pockets of perse pansies, poesies, posepays, powder palls \& wary:

I had a little pony:
his name was Dapple Gray:
and every time I had him,
he tried to get away:
who will eat from such a garden let him have an oedipal situation and my rights and privileges:
that the triadic Hegel could have been evidencing his
genitals is a notion of such cracking solemnity birds fail to fly:
some are spring harvests: today, April Fools', a squirrel in the leafless elm gathered torn bark and inner tissue from dead branches, wadding them into her mouth then going limb by thinning limb to leap onto the heavy electric wire, then going upstreet to my neighbor's streetside spruce: I
think that's
where the nest will be:
waste assimilated into use: the result a neatness unpremeditated, a re-ingestion of process:
so arranged it is that my wasted
life becomes words
that through complexity and
unstructured swirl
seek the fall-out of
comparable enhancements:
happenstance \& necessity
prediction \& surprise moment \& forever
and the gloomy, oh the melancholy,
remorseful
falling back and away
of time-sunk persons and places,
ragged knots
of a grounded, celestial kite:
yesterday robins
onsthe dark edge of dusk sang like
peepers:
I went out to listen and they were robins:
and on the cold edge of spring
though on a warm day
we went out into the woods for hepaticas up
along Six Mile Creek: we found one spring-beauty and by sun-warmed logs a few clusters of hepatica, hundreds of plants but few bloomers: the backfall of creekwater was interesting, countercaps, and compensating, the up-creek water along eddying banks:
peripheries:
the dance about the fire utterance of tongues, parlance of feet:
griefs can't be removed, only altered, caught up into the timed motions of bearable sway:
fall in love with yourself
where it's shallow:
don't
thwart shriveling up by
suddenly drowning:
if change is certain, as say so many,
certainty is where there isn't any:

> pop gun soda pop pop art popsicle mom \& pop popinjay pop in popeyed population

I can't get that star carted I said: flooded carburetor, cracked voltage regulator: I didn't realize at once it was apt: a Starchief: and one day a man said looking at the dash word, it has your name in it: Starchief: he was a good abstractor:

I had a little pony: his name was Dapple Gray: and when I tried to trim him, he had a lot to bray:
an inch of snow last night but mid morning is bright and melting: the shadows are white:
napalm isn't falling here so what is it:
first, an explosion near the ground: then a tarry rain,
soft and afire, falls, crumbles, \& sticks: sticks to trees, houses, children,
things like that: if
it hits it's $94.3 \%$ effective:
I see $m y$ death, $m y$ horror, the radical,
real, senseless pain,
as a coming afloat,
rocking in a mastery of oceans:
what time caricatures should
time keep:
to those busy making themselves
great, with grave music and
solemn looks, a thorough using up and setting forth of language's materials, I send
empty statements, slip-shoddiness,
incredible breeziness and such:
the wind we go to
understands everything:
I sing, though, in a way, the best I can, for I may be understood
where I do not understand:
around the aureola matters get touchy:
confusion erodes the ice-glass steel offices buildings of rationality: anti-rationality only makes another
kind of thrust: complexity
blurs the sleek towers, wilts the
phallus of mistaken direction:
welcome to your unattended,
coin-operated, do-it-yourself laundry:
bring and use your favorite bleach, soap, and starch: if
machine is
defective, please use another machine:
to start washer put money in coin meter and
(1) if slide type meter-slowly push
slide all the way in: then slowly
pull slide all the way out: *
(2) if rotary knob type meterturn knob:
tub
will start filling not later than $1 / 2$
minute after operating coin slide:

> stopcock cock \& bull
ears cocked cocktail peacock cockle cockney cockiness cockscomb poppycock cockeyed cockroach cockpit cocksure
dryclean wash 'n wears, even cotton
items: use this
handy clothing guide: follow
these simple steps:
brush away loose lint
and other soiling matter: turn sweaters
inside out: turn down cuffs of
trousers: insert the
necessary coins:
rubbers, after several drycleanings,
tend to lose elasticity: plastic-coated
fabrics often become stiff.
beware sequins, beads, and other fragile
ornaments, can get you into trouble:
remove wear wrinkles and sharpen creases and pleats: some spots refuse to come out, rust, mildew, dried paint, indelible ink:
little artery, couple inches long,
branching into cardiac muscle: it pops
and you give up philosophy and ultimate concern, car payments, son and wife, you give up the majors \& minors, the way you like your egg cooked, your class ring, lawn,
sparrows nesting in the garage, the
four crocus bulbs (maybe more next
year), toenails and fillings:
I wouldn't want to happen up on any
critters of eternity, absolutes that
end the world: fellow said one star
up there in our galaxy is mostly
gadolinium, a rare earth;
nobody knows how the concentration occurred:
then there are other surpluses and

## scarcities

that uneven the tissue:
I wouldn't want anything
to get known tight: ignorance is our
boat giving us motion: or, capsized,
knowledge is our ark which is more in
line with the tradition:
the ocean would then
be what it
is:

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PRLEF EDONGER POEMS
PROOF TWO 6-12-79 k1-es c-es
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Galley 9
Z75984003 NORTON a29
SELECTED LONGER POEMS
PROOF TWO 6-12-79 k1-es c-es
spirit, though
it encompasseth mightiness, etc., however,
cannot, like a motor,
raise and lower
toast:
nothing matters, believe me, except
everything: to sift \& sort, magnify
\& diminish, admit \& renounce, impairs
the event:
what the mind can't accept's obscene
the rest shines with an
additional, redeeming
light,
the light in the head
of language in motion:
the wave coming in, running, gathers, lofts, curls- the instant of motion's maximum organization: then: then one is forty \& hollow: the curl's reach redeems the hollow, equals it, till the curl touches over: what is the use: the crashing, the hollow coming topside into wide prevalence, the flat waters skinnying out and rushing back-is merely endurance until the next wave lifts:
as for what's left,
dip it and ship it: to have made it here is not to have it made:
entering is lovely:
such delicacies, scents, the
feminine source, perfumes: cookies
in the oven, delights
mixmaster, mixmaster
mast me a mix, ur,
mix me a mist, ur. .
the mixers and blenders chew up
differences: chomp \& whirl
to knotless paste: the spurt for equilibrium:
to compensate for which somewhere root,
bark, leaf must make a walnut, some
skinny saint rail through the cosmos,
shot from earth by penury and dread:
what is more costly or
needed than a mind shot to space by
shiny thrust, a renunciation of
earth, a negative blast away
I have seen all the way in with a white bang that they
are spheres, round solids, sprinkled,
lightly, in a medium, not
empty, called space and that
these round bodies go round
different orders of center
that swoosh away burning
their peripheries and sucking
their centers through virgin space, neither
up nor
down-the
terror that that is
the wav it is,
that particular way, a
pure flower of terror:

Galley 10
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Z75984x04 NORTON a29
PROOF TWO $6-12-79 \mathrm{k} 1$-es c -es
ancient souls sitting on
the bright banks of forever
in
raptures of old acquaintance: for every never again,
an always again: and young souls
from their quick missing
quick as branches and glittering:
where the lost remains, immortal in
the foreverness of the lost:
say good morning, say buon giorno, say hi
to infant brother, to mother, father, sit down under the golden pines on the slopes of no further parting:
the Buddhist nun burns for the peace her ashes will achieve:
the village woman coming home finds her shack afire, her
son $\&$ husband shot: she bends down where she is:
she is given tokens of the dead but her left arm like a sickle reaps at the air
for the harvest
already taken:
through the reeds somewhere, as by a paddy or ditch in her head
wind burrs
a leaf: the woman flutters,
her grief absolute and
not a mystery:
how can I know I
am not
trying to know my way into feeling as

## feeling

tries to feel its way into knowing: it's
indifferent what I say: the motions
by which
I move
manifest
merely a deeper congruence
where the structures are:
run my poem through your life and exist, decommissioned,
like rubble,
innocent, slouchy gn the uptake:
the scramblers, grabbers, buildersrubblerousers: sticking stone to false stone in a unity of walls which wants to come apart: let
weeds and grasses move in among a scattering, make a little shade, hide mice, give burrows to ground bees, byway hideouts to the engines of spiders, stones the
owl can come and sit in moonlight on: we
should all be in a shambles, shacked up, peeping round the grasshoppers, preserving a respectful quiet:
don't snatch \& grab: grab snatch:
laboratory tests attest,
when a system of two bodies charges and discharges itself it's peaceful as tulips:
can a 41-year-old man living on dandelion leaves
from the cool edges of junkyards
find
songlore enough
in the holocausts, boggy garbage
fly swarms, lamb bones, and rust-floral
cans
of his weedy search
to sustain interest:
the continuum, one
and visionless, within
which
the breakdown of pure forms,
arising of skyscrapers, laws,
the high crystal-clear arising
of theory:
the evening blue-purple, the trees
black,
the birds can't quit singing: damp
heat built
and rose through the golden towered afternoon,
broke finally into motion, as of
descent, rain beating
straight down
between racks of thunder:
can anything be erased: can this day's
praising hold to the day it praise
down the slopes of total entropy:
pray without ceasing
we found hailstones in the grass
and ate them to cool:
spurred stones
with interior milkwhite halos,
an arrested spangling
the high hard water
melted
aching our tongues.

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Galley 11
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SELECTED LONGER POEMS
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    Hibernaculum

